

WONDERFULLY MADE. By A. Rendle Short, M.D., F.R.C.S. (Pp. 159. 6s.).  
London: The Paternoster Press, 1951.

THIS little book by Professor Rendle Short sets out to give an account of the structure and functions of the human body for the non-medical reader, and to present the student of physiology with accurate and up-to-date facts from a somewhat unusual angle. There is no doubt that the author succeeds in both these objects, and he gives a most interesting and instructive set of chapters ranging in subject matter from the human foot, the digestive system, the constancy of body temperature, functions of the brain, to how the embryo develops. Any person of normal intelligence could follow these, and a busy practitioner wishing to review the vast field of general physiology might turn to them for an hour or two with relief. The purpose of writing such a book is, however, not to teach anatomy and physiology, but rather to use this knowledge in considering the philosophical and religious implications of the various theories of man's origin. The writer contrasts the "Theory of Natural Selection," or the so-called Darwinism, with the "Theory of Divine Creation," in which he has a strong belief, and also with the "Theory of Entelechy." The latter theory postulates an innate perfecting force within the animal which operates as the motivating factor instead of the blind chance attributed to the Darwinian theory. Bergson's "Creative Evolution," and Morgan's "Emergent Evolution" are given as explanations of how entelechy works, rather than as different theories in their own right. It is, of course, impossible in the space at the author's disposal, to do little more than pose the problem, and some of his reasoning against the mechanism whereby scientists have tried to explain man's origin, is of doubtful quality. He very rightly calls attention to the failure of many teachers and learners to appreciate the wonders of the human body as a functioning whole, on account of their concentration on detail.

A genuine attempt has been made to bring the calmness of mind and directness of thought of a surgeon to bear on the central cone of the problem of man's origin, and, although the mechanism may be variously conceived of, there can be few medical men to-day who would at heart doubt the ultimate dependence of man for his existence on a Supreme Being, call him God or any other name you will. Whether or not you agree with the author on his explanation of the mechanism is another matter. A stimulating and interesting book withall. W. R. M. M.

A TEXTBOOK OF MEDICINE. By E. Noble Chamberlain. (Pp. 962+xii; fig. 266. 50s.). Bristol: John Wright & Sons, 1951.

DR. CHAMBERLAIN has been fortunate in his choice of collaborators in this new Textbook of Medicine. He is personally responsible for the sections on the cardiovascular and endocrine systems, and shows his characteristic clarity and simplicity of approach. Recent graduates of "Queen's" will read the section on nervous diseases with added interest, because it was written by Professor F. J. Natrass of Newcastle, until recently an extern examiner here. This is one of the best chapters in the book. It is, however, unfair to select any section for special mention.

It is, of course, obvious that the day is past when one author can write a textbook of medicine unaided. As Dr. Chamberlain says in his modest preface: "Each contributor has dealt with his speciality in the way he thinks best, and there is thus no strict uniformity, but the common plan has been to lay emphasis on the salient features of disease, and to limit the description of the rarity." One feels that a wonderful degree of uniformity has indeed been achieved, but often one could wish that a little more space had been used to give the student more details of a clinical picture, rather than a somewhat bare outline.

The book contains 930 pages of text, which include 266 illustrations. The type is clear and easily read. Osler's Medicine, 1912 edition, had 1,174 pages of closer print, with only an occasional temperature chart. The subject of medicine has grown enormously in forty years, and more than ever is demanded of the student. One can but hope that soon a second edition of "Chamberlain" will be needed, and that many of the subjects will be as well, but more amply, treated.

The book is an achievement of which the Liverpool School of Medicine may be justifiably proud, and can be fully recommended to students and to their seniors. R. M.